

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 081055

NODIS

FOR AMBASSADOR LEONARD

FOLLOWING REPEAT CAPE TOWN 607 SENT ACTION SECSTATE 28 MAR 78

QUOTE S E C R E T CAPE TOWN 607

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PORG, SF, WA, PDEV

SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: BOTHA-KISSINGER CONVERSATION

REF: (A) CAPE TOWN 594, (B) STATE 87668, (C) DAR ES SALAAM 1296,

1. CLEMENS KAPUUNO'S ASSASSINATION INCREASES THE ODDS
AGAINST SAG ACCEPTANCE OF THE WESTERN PROPOSALS ON
NAMIBIA. IF PIK BOTHA, AS HIS AIDES CONTINUE TO IMPLY,
HAS BEEN ATTEMPTING, ALBEIT CAUTIOUSLY, TO PROMOTE
CABINET ACCEPTANCE OF THE PLAN, THE ASSASSINATION WILL
MAKE IT CONSIDERABLY MORE DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO DO SO.
AT THE SAME TIME, COMING ON THE HEELS OF THE COUNCIL

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OF NAMIBIA DECLARATION, SAM NUJOMA'S TV INTERVIEW REMARKS ON
MAJORITY RULE, AND THE SECRET SWAPO DOCUMENTS OVER WHICH THE
SAG HAS MADE SUCH A FUSS, THE TRAGIC ASSASSINATION OF KAPUUNO
WILL PROVIDE FURTHER RATIONALIZATION OF ANY SAG DECISION TO
MOVE AHEAD UNILATERALLY. THE SOUTH AFRICANS MAY CALCULATE
THAT THE KILLING OF KAPUUNO WILL BE A PARTICULARLY TELLING
JUSTIFICATION WITH WESTERN AUDIENCES. THE CABINET WILL REPORTEDLY

DISCUSS KAPUUNO'S ASSASSINATION IN ITS MEETING TOMORROW (MARCH 29)
AFTER BOTHA RETURNS FROM WINDHOEK (CAPE TOWN 603).

2. GIVEN THE NEW FACTOR OF KAPUUNO'S DEATH, I BELIEVE WE
SHOULD MOVE AHEAD WITH THE CARTER-CALLAGHAN (OR FIVE POWER
CHIEFS OF GOVERNMENT) LETTER TO VORSTER SUGGESTED IN REFTEL (A).
THE LETTER COULD BEGIN BY EXPRESSING SHOCK AND DISMAY AT THE
ASSASSINATION OF KAPUUNO, BUT STRESS THAT WHOEVER THE PERPETRATORS
OF THIS TRAGEDY, HIS DEATH FURTHER UNDERSCORES THE NEED TO
FIND A PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE FUTURE OF NAMIBIA. IN
THIS REGARD, THE MESSAGE COULD STRESS THAT THE WESTERN PROPOSAL
IS SHAPED TO PROVIDE A PEACEFUL ENVIRONMENT FOR AN IMPARTIAL
ELECTION FREE OF INTIMIDATION AND VIOLENCE BY ANY PARTY. THE
MESSAGE COULD ALSO STATE THAT THE WESTERN LEADERS ARE CONFIDENT
THAT THE PROPOSAL WILL ACHIEVE THIS OBJECTIVE AND THAT THE
WESTERN COUNTRIES WOULD VIEW WITH CONCERN EFFORTS BY ANY FORCE
TO DISRUPT A PEACEFUL POLITICAL PROCESS IN NAMIBIA.

3. SINCE DRAFTING THE ABOVE, WE HAVE HAD TIME TO READ
AMBASSADOR YOUNG'S CABLE SUGGESTING A WESTERN FIVE
FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING IN CAPE TOWN (DAR ES SALAAM 1296).
THE ADVANTAGES AS WE SEE THEM ARE:

--SUCH A MEETING COULD RECOUP THE SENSE OF MOMENTUM IN SOUTH
AFRICA TOWARD AN INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT WHICH EMERGED FOLLOWING
THE NEW YORK TALKS BUT WHICH HAS FADED RECENTLY AND WHICH COULD
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BE LOST ENTIRELY BY THE ASSASSINATION OF KAPUUNO.

--THE DRAMATIC GESTURE OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS COMING TO SOUTH
AFRICA WOULD NOT NECESSARILY DISSUADE THE SAG FROM PURSUING
THE INTERNAL COURSE BUT IT COULD GIVE PAUSE TO THE LEADERSHIP.
IT WOULD AT LEAST UNDERCUT THE PLAUSIBILITY OF SOUTH AFRICA
GOING IT ALONE.

--IF BOTHA IS INDEED WORKING ON BEHALF OF A SETTLEMENT, THE
MEETING WOULD STRENGTHEN HIS HAND, PARTICULARLY IF THE FIVE
FOREIGN MINISTERS COULD INVOLVE OTHER CABINET MINISTERS IN
DISCUSSION OF THE ISSUE AS AMBASSADOR YOUNG SUGGESTS.

--IT COULD ALSO PROVIDE THE MINISTERS THE OPPORTUNITY FOR FACE-
TO-FACE DISCUSSION WITH VORSTER, WHO IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS
IS THE DECISION MAKER.

--FINALLY, IT WOULD DRAMATIZE THE WESTERN COMMITMENT TO FINDING
A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IN NAMIBIA.

4. FOREMOST AMONG THE DISADVANTAGES ARE:

--THE PROBLEMS OF GETTING ALL FIVE WESTERN FOREIGN MINISTERS

TO UNDERTAKE SUCH A MISSION.

--THE POSSIBILITY THAT SUCH A MEETING WOULD BE MISINTERPRETED BY SWAPO AND THE FRONT LINE UNLESS COUNTERVAILED IN SOME FASHION. (THE NEGATIVE IMPACT COULD BE OFFSET IF THE FIVE FOREIGN MINISTERS ON THEIR RETURN STOPPED OFF IN LUSAKA TO TALK TO SAM NUJOMA.)

--THE POSSIBILITY THAT VORSTER MIGHT RESPOND TO THE FOREIGN MINISTERS WITH AN OUTRIGHT REJECTION, THUS UNDERSCORING THE DEFEAT FOR THE WESTERN INITIATIVE.

--VORSTER MIGHT TRY TO USE THE VISIT TO TRY TO BARGAIN WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTERS ON BILATERAL RELATIONS, MOST PARTICULARLY
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REGARDING WESTERN ATTITUDE TOWARD SOUTH AFRICA'S DOMESTIC POLICIES.

5. FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT THE DESIRE TO HEAD OFF MOVES BY THE SAG IN THE DIRECTION OF AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT WHICH WOULD BE HARD TO UNDO TENDS TO OUTWEIGH WHAT I AM SURE ARE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS OF TRYING TO GET FIVE FOREIGN MINISTERS TO COME TO CAPE TOWN ON A MISSION WITH UNCERTAIN PROSPECTS. THE DRAMA OF SUCH A VISIT IS MORE LIKELY TO DETER SOUTH AFRICA'S PLUNGING AHEAD INTO AN INTERNAL SETTLEMENT THAN A SET OF LETTERS, ALTHOUGH WE CANNOT OF COURSE GUARANTEE TURNING VORSTER AWAY FROM THIS COURSE INDIFINITELY, UNLESS SWAPO CAN BE BROUGHT TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSAL SO THAT THE FULL WEIGHT OF DISREGARDING THE WESTERN EFFORT FALLS SQUARELY ON SOUTH AFRICA.

6. IF IT SEEMS ADVISABLE TO ATTEMPT THE FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING IN CAPE TOWN, A PROPOSAL TO THAT EFFECT COULD EASILY BE COMBINED WITH THE PROPOSED LETTER.

7. PLEASE PASS THIS MESSAGE TO ANDY YOUNG AND DON MCHENRY.
BOWDLER

UNQUOTE COOPER

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NNN

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